Johanan that the halachah is as stated by R. Eliezer on a festival that falls after Sabbath?[3] He replied: Yes, that is the halachah. Am I to assume [he replied] that they [the Rabbis] differ from him?[4] — And do they not differ? Surely the Rabbis differ! — I would say that the Rabbis differ in regard to the other days of the year, but do they differ in regard to a festival which falls after a Sabbath? — But surely R. Akiba differs?[5] — Do we follow R. Akiba the rest of the year that we should now[6] commence to follow him? Why do we not follow R. Akiba all the rest of the year? Because eighteen blessings were instituted, not nineteen. Here too [on the festival] seven were instituted, not eight![7] [R. Zera then] said to him: It was not stated that such is the halachah,[8] but that we incline to this view.[9] It has been stated: R. Isaac b. Abdimi said in the name of our teacher [Rab]: Such is the halachah, but some say, we [merely] incline to this view. R. Johanan said: [The Rabbis] agree [with R. Eliezer].[10] R. Hiyya b. Abba said: This appears correct.[11] R. Zera said: Choose the statement of R. Hiyya b Abba, for he is very accurate in repeating the statements of his teacher, like Rahaba of Pumbeditha. For Rahaba said in the name of Rabbi Judah: The Temple Mount was a double stoa — a stoa within a stoa.[12] R. Joseph said: I know neither one nor the other,[13] but I only know that Rab and Samuel instituted for us a precious pearl in Babylon:[14] 'And Thou didst make known unto us, O Lord our God, Thy righteous judgments and didst teach us to do the statutes that Thou hast willed, and hast made us inherit seasons of gladness and festivals of freewill-offering, and didst transmit to us the holiness of Sabbath and the glory of the appointed season and the celebration of the festival. Thou hast divided between the holiness of Sabbath and the holiness of the festival, and hast sanctified the seventh day above the six working days: Thou hast separated and sanctified Thy people Israel with Thy holiness. And Thou hast given us' etc.[15]

MISHNAH. IF ONE [IN PRAYING] SAYS 'MAY THY MERCIES EXTEND TO A BIRD'S NEST',[16] 'BE THY NAME MENTIONED FOR WELL-DOING', OR 'WE GIVE THANKS, WE GIVE THANKS', HE IS SILENCED.[17]

GEMARA. We understand why he is silenced if he says 'WE GIVE THANKS, WE GIVE THANKS',because he seems to be acknowledging two powers;[18] also if he says, 'BE THY NAME MENTIONED FOR WELL-DOING', because this implies, for the good only and not for the bad, and we have learnt, A man must bless God for the evil as he blesses Him for the good.[19] But what is the reason for silencing him if he says 'THY MERCIES EXTEND TO THE BIRD'S NEST? — Two Amoraim in the West, R. Jose b. Abin and R. Jose b. Zebida, give different answers; one says it is because he creates jealousy among God's creatures,[20] the other, because he presents the measures taken by the Holy One, blessed be He, as springing from compassion, whereas they are but decrees.[21] A certain [reader] went down [before the Ark] in the presence of Rabbah and said, 'Thou hast shown mercy to the bird's nest, show Thou pity and mercy to us'. Said Rabbah: How well this student knows how to placate his Master! Said Abaye to him: But we have learnt, HE IS SILENCED? — Rabbah too acted thus only to test[22] Abaye.

A certain [reader] went down in the presence of R. Hanina and said, O God, the great, mighty, terrible, majestic, powerful, awful, strong, fearless, sure and honoured. He waited till he had finished, and when he had finished he said to him, Have you concluded all the praise of your Master? Why do we want all this? Even with these three that we do say,[23] had not Moses our Master mentioned them in the Law[24] and had not the Men of the Great Synagogue come and inserted them in the Tefillah, we should not have been able to mention them, and you say all these and still go on! It is as if an earthly king had a million denarii of gold, and someone praised him as possessing silver ones. Would it not be an insult to him?

R. Hanina further said: Everything is in the hand of heaven except the fear of heaven,[25] as it says, And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to fear.[26] Is the fear of heaven such a little thing? Has not R. Hanina said in the name R. Simeon b. Yohai: The Holy One, blessed be He, has in His treasury nought except a store of the fear of heaven, as it says, The fear of the Lord is His